

Government of the District of Columbia

Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Anna Chamberlin, AICP *Jonathan Rogers for*
Associate Director

DATE: April 8, 2022

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 20666 – 1634 North Capitol Street NW

APPLICATION

1644 North Capitol, LLC (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X § 901.2, requests a special exception from the penthouse uses requirements of Subtitle C § 1501.1(d) to permit a restaurant use within the penthouse of a 97-unit hotel that is currently under construction (building permit number B2008363). The site is located in the MU-4 Zone at 1634 North Capitol Street NW (Square 3101, Lot 118) and served by a 12.17-foot public alley.

SUMMARY OF REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application materials and has determined that the proposed penthouse conversion to a restaurant will lead to an increase in vehicle, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips on the localized transportation network. In addition, this project will result in increased pick-up and drop-off activity and potentially reduced availability of on-street parking within the immediate area.

The Applicant currently has an incomplete public space permit application from 2021 (TOPS #358686) for a circular driveway on North Capitol Street NW which is intended to serve patrons of both the hotel and the proposed penthouse restaurant. While DDOT does not support the circular driveway for vehicles, the Applicant must complete the public space permitting process to determine appropriate pick-up and drop-off procedures for the restaurant and hotel. DDOT cannot support the addition of a restaurant at this property until that is resolved.

Additionally, DDOT expects development projects to minimize their potential impact on the transportation network by reducing their automotive travel demand. This can be accomplished by

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implementing a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan. DDOT requests Applicants seeking BZA relief commit to a TDM Plan when the hotel or residential building has 20 or more units/rooms and the relief requested is directly related to an increase in density or vehicle activity on-site or a new land use is introduced. In this case, the Applicant is proposing to introduce a new land use (restaurant) to the penthouse of the hotel that would create additional conflicting traffic in an already un-resolved pick-up/drop-off situation. To help manage these conflicts between uses on-site and reduce the demand for driving, the Applicant needs to implement a TDM Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT objects to the requested penthouse relief for a restaurant use unless the following conditions are included in the BZA Order:

- Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the restaurant, the Applicant will complete public space permit application #358686 and develop a pick-up/drop-off plan for both the hotel and restaurant, subject to DDOT approval; and
- For the life of the project, the Applicant will implement the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan for the entire building:
 - Identify Transportation Coordinators for the planning, construction, and operations phases of development. The Transportation Coordinators will act as points of contact with DDOT, goDCgo, and Zoning Enforcement and will provide their contact information to goDCgo.
 - Transportation Coordinator will develop, distribute, and market various transportation alternatives and options to hotel/restaurant employees and hotel patrons, including promoting transportation events (i.e., Bike to Work Day, National Walking Day, Car Free Day) on property website and in any internal building newsletters or communications.
 - Transportation Coordinator will subscribe to goDCgo’s hospitality newsletter and receive TDM training from goDCgo to learn about available options for implementing the TDM Plan.
 - Front office and customer-facing staff will be provided training by goDCgo (either in-person or webinar) to learn of the non-automotive options for traveling to the property.
 - Provide guests with goDCgo’s Get Around Guide by making it available on the property website and in printed format for front office or customer-facing staff.
 - Provide brochures with information on non-automotive options for traveling to the property available at all times in a visible location in the lobby.

STREETScape AND PUBLIC REALM

DDOT’s lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of the public realm design. If any portion of this or future projects at the property propose elements within District owned right-of-way or DDOT-regulated building restriction area, the Applicant is required to pursue a public space permit through DDOT’s permitting process. It is noted that the site has a 15-foot Building Restriction Line (BRL) along the Quincy Place NW frontage. The area between the property line and BRL is regulated as if it is DDOT public space and should remain “park-like” with landscaping.

The Applicant has an active permit application that has been dormant since 2021 that contains several un-addressed objections (TOPS 358686). The following items proposed in public space will need to be resolved by the Applicant during permitting:

- There is a proposed circular driveway with two (2) curb cuts and paving in public space shown on the Surveyors Plat that DDOT does not support. Work with DDOT on an appropriate curbside management plan to serve pick-up/drop-off absent the circular driveway;
- Close the existing curb cut in front of the property and restore the curb line along N. Capitol Street NW. Restore the sidewalk space to typical concrete blocks and install any missing street trees where the curb cut will be closed;
- There is a large patio with fencing that is shown within the BRL on Quincy Place that could be occupies the entire building restriction area. Move the fencing back sufficiently far to ensure the sidewalk on Quincy Place has at least a 6-foot clear path. Confirm the patio meets public space regulations and obtain public space occupancy permit; and
- It is noted that there appears to be doors swinging outward into the alley and sidewalk. Applicant should ensure that the gate doors are either recessed or open inward.

DDOT expects the adjacent public realm to meet all District standards. The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the [DCMR](#), the most recent version of DDOT's [Design and Engineering Manual \(DEM\)](#), and the [Public Realm Design Manual](#) for public space regulations and design guidance. A permit application can be filed through the DDOT [Transportation Online Permitting System \(TOPS\)](#) website.

AC:sm